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AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT:

Please insert the following new Abstract presented on a separate sheet attached to this response.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention provides a method for processing plant stalk having a fibrous outer part (skin) and an inner hurd, the method including the steps of: striking the stalk at at least one location along the stalk length so as to cause the stalk to bend at the at least one location thereby causing fracture of the hurd across the stalk at each striking location so as to expose at least part of the inner hurd; and separating at least part of the hurd from the skin. The present invention also provides an apparatus for processing stalk having a fibrous outer part and an inner hurd comprising: a feeder (2) for feeding the stalks for processing; a decorticator for decorticating the fed stalks comprising: a bending element (12) to which the stalks are fed at a predetermined speed; a striking means (13) that cause each stalk to bend over the bending element (12) and to thereby fracture the hurd across the stalk and/or longitudinally split the skin at various locations along the stalk length, wherein the striking means (13) further serves to separate the hurd from the fibrous outer part of the stalk. The present invention also provides fibres and hurd produced by the methods and apparatus of the present invention.